

In re: Dube *et al.*  
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2. (Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein said hydroxide is a hydroxide of an alkali metal.

4. (Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein said reducing sugar is a pure reducing sugar selected from the group consisting of glucose, fructose, sucrose, mannose, galactose, rhamnose, and mixtures thereof.

9. (Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein said flavorful composition is applied at an amount of from about 5% to about 8% by weight based on the total dry weight of the tobacco material in the smoking article.

10. (Twice amended) A method for improving the flavor and aroma characters of a smoking article, said method comprising:

providing a mixture consisting essentially of high fructose corn syrup and sodium hydroxide;

subjecting said mixture to heat treatment for a time and under conditions sufficient to produce a flavorful composition, wherein said heat treatment is conducted at a temperature of at least about 150°C;

applying said flavorful composition directly to a tobacco material; and  
preparing a smoking article comprising said tobacco material.

15. (Twice amended) A method for improving the flavor and aroma characters of a smoking article comprising:

providing a mixture consisting essentially of a reducing sugar and a hydroxide of an alkali metal, wherein the reducing sugar is selected from the group consisting of a pure reducing sugar, high fructose corn syrup, and a phosphate-substituted reducing sugar;

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subjecting said mixture to heat treatment for a time and under conditions sufficient to produce a flavorful caramel composition, wherein said heat treatment is conducted at a temperature of at least about 150°C;

applying said flavorful composition to a tobacco material; and  
preparing a smoking article comprising said tobacco material.

17. (Amended) The method of Claim 15, wherein said reducing sugar is a pure reducing sugar selected from the group consisting of glucose, fructose, sucrose, mannose, galactose, rhamnose, and mixtures thereof.

Please add new Claims 27-30 as follows:

27. (New) The method of Claim 10, wherein said mixture further comprises water.

28. (New) The method of Claim 10, wherein the heat treatment is conducted under a pressure of from about 20 psig to about 500 psig.

29. (New) The method of Claim 10, wherein the heat treatment is conducted for a period of at least about 10 minutes.

30. (New) A method for improving the flavor and aroma characters of a smoking article, comprising:

providing an aqueous mixture consisting essentially of water, a high fructose corn syrup, and a hydroxide;

subjecting said mixture to heat treatment for a time and under conditions sufficient to produce a flavorful caramel composition, wherein said heat treatment is conducted at a temperature of at least about 150°C;

applying said flavorful composition to a tobacco material; and  
preparing a smoking article comprising said tobacco material.